

# THE CHILD

## Monthly News Summary

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**GRACE ABBOTT**

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**CHILDREN'S BUREAU**  
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MONTHLY NEWS SUMMARY

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## Grace Abbott: Public Servant

By FRANCES PERKINS

**G**RACE ABBOTT I regard as one of the greatest women we have ever produced here in the United States of America. Perhaps the best answer I could give to a question of how women attain real achievements in government is to say why and how Grace Abbott achieved in government. She held high office in the Federal Government as Chief of the Children's Bureau, and she could have held higher office if she had desired.

When Miss Abbott could no longer be persuaded to remain as head of the Children's Bureau it was a very great disappointment to me, because she was carrying out a plan she had had under consideration for several years. Her advice and cooperation in treating not only the problems of the Children's Bureau but those of the whole Department of Labor were of inestimable value to me in my first year as Secretary of Labor.

Our personal friendship was enriched by this period of association in work, and I often called on her for advice and assistance in the work of the Department, which she generously offered to continue to give. Until her death she maintained a direct advisory relationship to the Children's Bureau.

Grace Abbott was one of the most distinguished women in America, with a scope and authority in the field of public welfare and a concentration upon the problems of labor as well as of children which made her leadership in these fields of great value not only to the Government, but to private social agencies everywhere. The competence and integrity of her research and the effectiveness and humanity of her presentation of factual material to people who needed it for personal guidance in the daily life of children and families gave her a unique position in American life, the results of which will be felt for many generations.

What was her pattern? First of all it was a pattern of professional standards and perfection. I never knew more the sense of a professional approach to every problem that she had in mind and of a competence, the same competence and skill that a craftsman has, or a machinist has. She knew how to do. She knew how to analyze social problems. She knew where to find the medication or the relief for these problems; she knew how and when to apply it; and she knew and understood the human heart and the human brain through which it had to be applied.

Grace Abbott had knowledge. She studied to get knowledge; then she went on and kept her power of acquiring more knowledge out of experience and out of other people's experiences. That, of course, is one of the great advantages of the trained and educated mind—it can learn not only by its own experience but by the recorded experience of others, and learn to associate these two phases of developing information into one pattern.

The old-fashioned virtues of conscience and character were hers. The advance of women in government or in the learned professions is impossible without conscience and character. Women without those qualities, however brilliant their minds may be, however sparkling their personalities, will not make the progress that we want to see them make.

Grace Abbott had that broad, cultural education which expanded the heart and strengthened the faith and aspiration; she had professional training which sharpened her mind as a tool; and she had that self-discipline which everyone needs who undertakes a responsibility. Everyone who takes an oath and solemnly swears that he will perform certain duties under the law and within the law, so help him God, must impose upon himself a certain self-discipline, and persons who have not learned

self-discipline as early at least as their years of education find it hard to acquire under later stresses and strains when they bear responsibility.

Then, Grace Abbott had a profound and steady and unalterable unselfishness: She had always the conception that she was less important than the people whom she served, than the women and children of this country who looked to her for the solution of their troubles. I knew her once to risk her health against the plea of all of us, for we were worried about her health. Her only answer was, "No person is as important as this program which we have in mind, and it so happens that for the moment I am the only person who can defend it. The rest of you can stay outside and shout, and that will help. But because I am the only person who can defend it, to be of help to mothers and of help to infants, to save infant lives and maternal lives, I am the one to go forward and fight for it." She went with the most extraordinary disregard of herself—what I call truly scientific and impersonal unselfishness.

Her ability to cooperate enabled her to work with all kinds of people. She could humble herself. It is one of the greatest assets which every woman who, like Grace Abbott, undertakes to go into public life and public office must learn—the art and the grace of humility. I have seen her—and she was a proud woman—with great humility suffer fools gladly, listen to the most preposterous advice respectfully; and, if it was kindly and warm-hearted, she thanked the giver for the advice, and that, of course, was done with real sincerity. That was why she was able to cooperate with all kinds of people and get the best out of them. Members of her staff will tell you that. Nobody ever got so much work out of any staff, I think, as she did, and that was because she knew how to cooperate with people, not only how to direct them but how to cooperate and bring out of them the best that was in them.

Her manners were what I like to call "equalitarian manners." I remember being taught by my father as to what were the proper manners for people who lived in a democracy—how one must never overlook any one, because

the least of these is our brother and, in addition to that, our fellow citizen; and how one must have a way, an approach to people with whom one talked, not subservient, not arrogant—I know no better word for it than equalitarian. That does not mean to have rough manners. They are good manners, manners of dignity and kindness. Grace Abbott had those, and every woman who hopes to go into public office must learn to acquire them. There must be no pride of intellect, no pride in experience, and no pride like vanity if women are to do the work that they have an opportunity to do in high public office.

And then she had the capacity to take ridicule and abuse (I have seen her do it) without anger or resentment or—more important—a sense of degradation and despair. Many remember the days when speeches were made on the floor of Congress asking what right that "old maid" had to go to people and tell them how to bring up their children! Grace Abbott and her predecessor, Julia Lathrop, had to "take it," but they walked out smilingly, just as though nothing had happened.

Because she had flexibility Grace Abbott could change her mind and adapt her program, was ready to take the best she could get at the moment and go forward from what she had to what she believed ought to be.

In short, Grace Abbott had the qualities and virtues that I think will help women to be successful in the administration of government enterprises of all sorts, for those who administer government enterprises deal with the public. The public must be met on honest grounds in an honest way, yet with full insight into the problem and into the meaning of the problem, and into the agony and the tragedy of those who hope the Government will help them solve their particular problems.

Those who have never seen poor people buckling in their belts, holding their chins up, and going forward courageously in hope and faith that the community they live in is a community of good and Christian people who will see them through, those who have never seen them face disappointment, cannot appreciate what it is they mean when they say,

"This is a free country. This is a democracy—isn't it?" They are not thinking of the form of government. They are thinking of the relations between individuals in whom they believe because they are fellow Americans. One of the tasks of the educated woman is to help make the relationship among all our people one of confidence and sympathy and understanding, not because one has read about trouble in books but because, like Grace Abbott, one has known and seen poverty and allowed

one's self to be touched by it and its pity and terror.

The example of Grace Abbott's life and work is worth following—insight developed by direct contact with poverty and trouble. She summoned her knowledge, her skill, her discipline and found the practical solutions. She summoned her courage and her patience and applied adroitly the solutions to the situation.

*"May she go from strength to strength in the life of perfect service."*

## Grace Abbott and the Children's Bureau

By KATHARINE F. LENROOT

How well I remember the August day in 1921 when Julia Lathrop, dearly beloved first Chief of the Children's Bureau, turned over the helm to Grace Abbott, strong and able in the power and wisdom of her 43 years. Her Middle-West pioneer heritage, her sister's early interest in social welfare, her years at Hull House with Jane Addams, her work with the foreign born, her experience in training for social work in the old Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, her work as director of the Child Labor Division of the Children's Bureau when it was entrusted with the administration of the first Federal Child-Labor Law, her later work with the War Labor Policies Board, as secretary of the second White House children's conference and as secretary of the Children's Commission on Employment of the first International Labor Conference, had given her rich preparation for the responsibilities which she was to carry with distinction for 13 critical years.

As we walked over to lunch at the "inn" from the lath-and-plaster temporary building which housed the Children's Bureau for many years, Grace Abbott spoke with humility of the loss which Miss Lathrop's going meant to the Children's Bureau, and of the greatness of the task which she was assuming. In these first days in office, she spent many hours going

over the run-of-the-mine correspondence in recent months, getting a bird's-eye view of the services which mothers and those working with children were asking of their Bureau, of the problems which were placed before it for study and recommendation.

The Congress was in session that summer, and the Sheppard-Towner bill—the pioneer Federal-aid measure for maternity and infancy—was under consideration. At hearings and on the floor, the "old maids" at the Children's Bureau who had what seemed to many to be fantastic ideas about the Government's responsibility for human welfare were the subject of attack and ridicule. But Miss Abbott's courage and forthrightness inspired confidence, and the measure became law in November of her first year as Chief. Before she actually began the administrative duties which the new act placed upon her Miss Abbott made a hurried trip to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to see how work for children was progressing that had been inaugurated by Miss Lathrop.

The Sheppard-Towner Act was constantly under attack during the short period of 7 years when it was in operation, from those who felt it might interfere with the private practice of medicine, from women who had fought against suffrage and now fought against the extension of government services

for the protection of motherhood and childhood, from those who challenged the theory of Federal participation with the States in saving the lives of mothers and babies, though they had no word of opposition to Federal and State cooperation to wipe out diseases of cows, pigs, or plants. Yet through it all Miss Abbott was a calm, steady, and conservative administrator, content to follow the long road of gradual development through the establishment of relationships of mutual confidence and understanding between the State agencies and the Federal Government, rather than to take short cuts of Federal imposition of detailed or inflexible requirements.

Back of the State programs of public-health nursing, prenatal and child-health conferences, supervision of midwives, instruction of mothers through class work and the printed word was the force of public opinion, made effective through the inspiration of Grace Abbott and under the leadership of women like Maud Wood Park. This public opinion was mobilized largely through the agency of women's organizations coordinated for legislative work by the device of the Women's Joint Congressional Committee. Above all other Federal bureaus, the Children's Bureau in that first decade after woman suffrage was achieved represented women's stake in government. Miss Abbott was the hero and the pride of women who were just beginning to find a place in public affairs.

The genius for leadership which Grace Abbott manifested throughout her life was perhaps exemplified best in the fight for the child-labor amendment—a piece of unfinished business which was in her mind and on her lips as death approached. To the task of laying a foundation for Federal protection of children against work, that interfered with health, schooling, or that priceless share of freedom for play that is to a child what civil rights are to the adult, Miss Abbott brought legal training and personal friendship with the best in the legal profession and the leaders in the labor movement. Wisely, the task of drafting the amendment was entrusted to a citizens' committee working under the chairmanship of Samuel Gompers. It was Miss Abbott in Con-

gressional hearings who, with unsurpassed clarity and quickness of response, discussed the many difficult constitutional questions which consideration of the amendment presented and gave the committees an incontrovertible foundation of fact as to the need for Federal action. Her intellectual leadership was so firmly established in the hearings that her judgment as to amendments presented when the proposal reached the floors of House and Senate was accepted unhesitatingly by its proponents. Through roll call after roll call on weakening amendments the lines were held, and the final vote on submission of the amendment to the States was carried by 61 to 23 in the Senate, and 297 to 69 in the House.

The action of the Supreme Court last June in holding the amendment still open for ratification brought Miss Abbott, in her final illness, the keenest joy. She telegraphed to the Children's Bureau that day, saying "it certainly was a famous victory." Completion of ratification by the eight States whose action is needed to place it in the Constitution will be the best monument that could be erected to the memory of this great friend of children.

Miss Abbott lived to have a share in the framing of the Social Security Act, which placed on a firm and greatly expanded basis the work which she began under the Sheppard-Towner legislation. She would have rejoiced in the passage of the social-security amendments, extending the benefits and services provided. She was keenly interested in the development of the outlines of a national health program, and she rejoiced in the enactment of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, with its child-labor provisions. She was greatly concerned, in her last days, with the problems and future of the United States Department of Labor, the department which throughout the years has provided the shelter and framework within which the Children's Bureau has functioned—and she was troubled, yet confident, in regard to the future of the International Labor Organization.

Through all her years of close contact with the executive and legislative branches of government—in times of reaction and in times of advance—Grace Abbott preserved a vigorous

faith in the American people, in representative government, and in democratic processes. Even when it was most difficult to secure the needed legislative foundation for the safeguarding of mothers and children, Miss Abbott was always the first, in conversation, to come to the defense of the basic integrity and ability of the elected representatives of the people. She was patient and tolerant in all her dealings with her associates and superiors in the executive branch of the Government, and she rejoiced in the friendship of that great jurist, Justice Brandeis. Even when the lines of battle were most closely drawn and she was mustering all her resources for combat, Grace Abbott was never petty or bitter in her attitude toward her opponents. She loved to say of the juvenile court that it represented "Justice with her eyes unbandaged." She herself faced life always with vision unclouded by anger, annoyance, or vengeful passion.

Although Miss Abbott was a great administrator and a great leader, it is as a fearless and careful seeker for truth that she made her deepest impress. With rare understanding of the significance of underlying social and economic trends, Miss Abbott saw the needs of children always in relation to general social needs, but unfailingly insisted that the needs of children were paramount.

Without hesitation in times of crisis or in areas of special strain Miss Abbott sent investigators of the Children's Bureau to determine and publicly report the effect of economic and social distress upon the lives and health of children. In so doing she was carrying out the primary purpose of the Children's Bureau—"to investigate and report \* \* \* upon all matters pertaining to the welfare of children and child life." Her studies of the welfare of the children in families of maintenance-of-way workers and other railroad employees, her reports of conditions surrounding children in coal-mining towns, in sugar-beet fields, in migrant families following the crops, have been important sources of information needed as a basis for a just ordering of economic life. She was among the first to show clearly the need for Federal unemployment relief, and the Bureau studies of the transient boy in the early

years of the depression paved the way for later studies and for remedial measures.

With the keenness of her thought, the sureness of her judgment, and the convincing impact of her forthright American purpose, Grace Abbott penetrated large areas of American life and of international activity. The staff of the Children's Bureau is proud that for 13 years the Bureau was the chief instrument through which she made her leadership effective. To the end of her life she thought of herself as part of the Children's Bureau, and the Bureau staff, on its part, cherished her as its "Chief." She fulfilled the promise in the closing paragraph of her letter of resignation, and the entire letter may be regarded as a charter for the future of the work which she held so dear. Following an introductory paragraph she wrote:

In resigning from the Children's Bureau, I want to say that year by year evidence has accumulated of its importance in our national life. Children are so affected by industrial and other basic community conditions that a final test of our recovery program may well be what it does to remove the injustices from which children have suffered in the past. But as children are not merely pocket editions of adults, special health and protective services for children are essential for their optimum growth and development as well as measures which will bring security to the wage earner and the farmer.

The Children's Bureau combines in its staff training and experience in the techniques and procedures which such services for children require. Pediatricians, social workers, lawyers, and labor administrators employed by the Bureau are in the habit of working out together the programs which are necessary for the care and protection of children. Through the years the Bureau has developed cooperative relationships with State and local departments of labor, health, and welfare. As we pass through and out of this period of great suffering by many millions of children, it is of the greatest importance that we make sure that the special health and medical services which children require, the community services which are necessary to prevent delinquency and to care adequately for all the children who suffer from special handicaps, are provided. Since these are national as well as State and local problems, it is important that the United States Children's Bureau be enabled to cooperate more effectively, with money and personnel, in the development of these services.

With your appreciation of these problems and the Secretary of Labor's understanding of the special measures which are necessary for the accomplishment, I leave in the belief that the program of the Bureau will be developed and expanded during this administration.

In connection with this official leave taking, I should like to say how greatly I have appreciated the opportunity which you have given me of working with and under my friend, Frances Perkins, and my hope that I may continue as a private citizen that relationship with her and with my successor and former co-workers in the Children's Bureau.

## Grace Abbott of Nebraska

By HON. GEORGE W. NORRIS

I am unable to express the love and admiration of Nebraska people for Grace Abbott. As Nebraskans, we are proud of her career, her life, and her work. She has brought to our great Commonwealth honor, credit, and distinction. We are proud, as Nebraskans, to be represented by the character and life work of this great woman.

But Miss Abbott was more than a Nebraskan. While I am proud of her, while I am proud to say she was born and reared in Nebraska, yet I think of her, not as being a Nebraskan, but as being a national character and an international character. Her life and her life's work went far beyond the confines of her native State. Few women in this world have done as much good for suffering humanity as she has accomplished. Thousands, yes, millions of little children have grown up into noble manhood and womanhood because of her work, her teachings, and her accomplishments. She brought happiness to many thousands of little children.

The noblest of all human activities is the work that preserves the life and adds to the happiness and comfort of little children. When we remember that the children of today are to be the men and women of tomorrow, and that the future of our country and of the world de-

pends to a great extent upon the training and development of these children, we begin to realize how the greatest accomplishment that can come, for the benefit of future generations, must come from the training of little children for the work, the labor, and the responsibilities that will soon be theirs.

The work of Grace Abbott never can be fully evaluated. It is difficult even to comprehend how the influence of her energy is imperceptibly, unconsciously, but nevertheless forcefully, increasing happiness and replacing suffering and misery with comfort—that wonderful influence upon men and women everywhere, that indescribable, silent force that improves manhood and womanhood from infancy. We love to honor our leaders, our statesmen, our jurists, our philanthropists, but too often we forget the noble men and women who, like Grace Abbott, have, silently and unknown, accomplished more for the betterment of humanity and the alleviation of human suffering than has often come from the clamor and publicity which have surrounded the acts of powerful and influential advocates and leaders. Upon the brow of this great woman, a just and righteous history will place a diadem of virtue and honest endeavor second to none.

## Childhood Scenes<sup>1</sup>

One of Grace Abbott's friends once asked why she did not write "the recollections of a prairie child." Her childhood was spent in the prairie town of Grand Island, Nebr., whither the adventuring spirit of her New England abolitionist family had taken them. Her father, one of the State's first lawyers, was a member of the State's Constitutional Convention, and served a term as Lieutenant Gover-

nor. Her mother, who is still living, was one of the early and distinguished graduates of Rockford College—a pioneer college for women in the northern abolitionist section of the State, where her family kept a station on the old "underground railroad." A few years ago this college, on the occasion of its ninetieth anniversary, awarded an honorary degree to Elisabeth Griffin Abbott in recognition of her services in behalf of education in the pioneer State of Nebraska. Mrs. Abbott, who was then over

<sup>1</sup>As told to Elisabeth Shirley Enochs, U. S. Children's Bureau.

90, was unable to go to Illinois to receive the hood, and it was her daughter Grace who received it for her.

Mrs. Abbott was likewise a pioneer in the woman-suffrage movement and frequently entertained Susan B. Anthony. Grace Abbott often mentioned these visits and laughingly commented on her father's approval of Miss Anthony's taste in dress and his hope that his daughters, when they grew up, would adopt the heavy, black silk dress with white ruching as suitable and dignified attire for serious-minded young women.

But although Grace Abbott did not adopt Miss Anthony's fashion in dress, she did adopt her views on suffrage, and her contribution to the cause was recognized many years later when a group of woman-suffrage leaders presented to her a letter written in 1881 by Susan B. Anthony urging her coworkers to concentrate their efforts on Nebraska, where a State referendum on woman suffrage was in preparation and where chances for success seemed particularly bright. The letter was presented to Grace Abbott as perhaps the most prominent Nebraska woman who had worked for suffrage and the woman who had carried on in our own day and time the fine spirit and courage of the Nebraska women of the eighties.

In those early days, too, there were grasshoppers, drought, crop failures, and depressions. Miss Abbott often described how these calamities affected her own family and plans for the children's education. But back of it all, she had the warm security of a home and the affection of devoted parents, brothers, and sister. This background gave Miss Abbott an understanding of the struggles which parents are willing to make for their children and increased her eagerness to see all American children enjoy a reasonable minimum of opportunity for pleasant home life, affectionate care, and good schools. In her early years her first pioneer victory was won in the field of letters—literally.

Here is the story in her own words:

One day in September when I was only 4 years old I visited school for the first time, on a special invitation from the teacher. I went to the blackboard with the older children to write the letters of the alphabet. I knew just one, A, so I covered my board with A's.

The teacher erased all my beautiful A's and wrote a B on the board. "There," she said, "You know the A's, Grace, now make some B's." But I thought I knew my limitations, so I made another row of A's. The teacher returned and explained that I must learn to make B's. Whereupon I said, "I can't make B's, I tell you—I can't and I can't!" I put down my chalk and went home.

My mother said, "Well, never mind, play in the garden like a good girl, but remember, you'll have to learn to make B's sometime."



Grace Abbott as a child

The next year, when I was old enough to enroll in school, I had learned to make many other letters, but the B's were still unconquered. And I can remember my brother warning me, the first day of school, "If you don't learn to make B's, you'll never be able to learn to read and write." When I returned that evening with my lovely new slate bound in red felt, I repeated to myself, "Well, I've got to learn to make B's or I'll never be able to read or write." I did not want to be shown how. I had been shown so often—probably one explanation of my difficulty. I left the cheerful porch where the events of the day were being discussed by my brothers and sister and went into the parlor to meet my crisis alone. I emerged soon with my slate covered with B's and the certainty that I was not to be numbered among the illiterate. And there was great rejoicing over my victory at supper that night!

After Grace Abbott had finished with the A's and B's of the little red schoolhouse, she went through Grand Island College, did graduate work in the University of Nebraska, and then more or less drifted into teaching.

During her college years one of Grace Abbott's friends was Ruth Bryan, daughter of William Jennings Bryan. Their fathers had diametrically opposite political views, but the two girls were always good friends; and when Ruth came to Washington as Congresswoman from Florida, she worked closely with Grace, the Chief of the Children's Bureau—just as in the old Nebraska days they had acted together in amateur theatricals. Grace Abbott used to tell of one of the plays in which Ruth Bryan was the leading lady while she herself took the part of an English butler. There had been some difficulty in assembling a wardrobe. Grace finally made her appearance arrayed in some clothing borrowed from the "great commoner" himself. The coat and hat, though many times too big for her, evoked great applause and amazed comments.

Miss Abbott was as interested in individual children as in the cause of childhood in general. After she came to the Children's Bureau a school-girl niece came to live with her,

and boys and girls spilled all over the place. She would pause in a moment of her campaign against infant mortality to send baby turtles to a youngster sick in the hospital, or an ingenious new toy to the small child of one of her Children's Bureau staff. She took a special interest in the adopted child of Clark, one of the messengers on the Bureau's staff. On Sunday afternoons she could sometimes be found playing ball with the young sons of another Bureau associate, and on her last day as Chief of the Children's Bureau she called for these two boys in order to spend the afternoon with them in a speedboat on the Potomac.

Her deep understanding of the child and her deep understanding of polities are alike revealed in her comment on the short-sightedness of a certain mother who could not understand why her two sons wanted to stay in the garden late in the evening to keep the boys next door from tearing down a hut they had laboriously erected that day. "But you can rebuild it tomorrow, even if they do tear it down," the mother had said. "What that mother didn't understand," commented Grace Abbott, "was that it was not the tearing down that mattered, it was letting somebody else get ahead of them."

## A Good Citizen

By WILLIAM L. CHENERY

Grace Abbott was a graduate student of the University of Chicago when I first knew her. She had done a brief turn at teaching after graduation from Nebraska, and she was ripe for broader fields in which to exercise her great gifts and qualities. She came of abolitionist stock, and she inherited the abounding energy of her pioneer parents. In her a passionate sense of public right was leavened by a great good humor and almost intuitive perception of the thoughts and feelings of many sorts of men and women.

Miss Abbott had not been long in Chicago when her services were demanded by a group of men and women whose compassion had been

aroused by the exploitation of immigrants, then being imported by the hundreds of thousands to do the work of America's expanding industry.

Grace Abbott dropped her graduate studies to defend these helpless strangers. When she was able finally to return to the university it was as a distinguished professor and a world-famous authority on problems of government involving an understanding of the underprivileged and of doing justice to them.

Her work in behalf of immigrants was brilliantly successful because she had the wisdom to search for the significant facts of their introduction to America. She had the wit to

look for essentials and the patient energy to drive on until she found the facts upon which convincing conclusions could be built. When she approached a problem she scorned to let her preconceptions interfere with her inquiries. Quick and flashing as was her intelligence, she jumped to no conclusions. Consequently when she made a report she created public opinion. Her facts were indisputable and her reasoning sound. Nobody in Chicago and perhaps no one in America did more to put an end to the exploitation of immigrants. When she described the tortuous routes immigrants were compelled to take from New York to the West in order that all interested railroads might share in their fares, public opinion ended permanently the callous abuse.

Immediately on leaving the university Grace Abbott went to Hull House to live. Around Jane Addams a group of distinguished women had gathered. Alice Hamilton was making the first of her far-reaching studies of industrial diseases. Florence Kelley, pioneer factory inspector, had recently written her influential book, *Ethical Gains Through Legislation*. Julia C. Lathrop had already become famous for her efforts to civilize the poor-houses and insane asylums of the country. At once Grace Abbott took her place among these older leaders. So it was natural that Miss Lathrop, the first Chief of the Children's Bureau, should summon Grace Abbott to take

charge of the Government's campaign to put an end to the abuses of child labor.

Miss Lathrop and Miss Abbott were a magnificent team. Both had the courage and the vigor and the wisdom from the very start to fight spoils politics and to insist upon the employment of a highly skilled staff. Both had profound faith in the results to be derived from honest, intelligent inquiry and the careful accumulation of pertinent facts. Both had generous, discerning minds and the constructive imagination of true stateswomen.

Miss Abbott was the general in command of the army combating the evils of child labor. She enforced the law when there was a law. She gathered the material that aroused and nourished public opinion when the law was ruled unconstitutional. She was always good-tempered, always compassionate, always driving toward the great goal of national protection of children, and always sure of final success.

She was a worker and a fighter and a thinker and also a merry companion. Her eyes sparkled and her laugh was ready and there was wit at the end of her tongue. She was a good citizen. Because of her, hundreds of thousands of Americans have had happier lives, free from the exploitation and abuses she challenged and against which she labored successfully. She was a great woman and a noble American.

## With the Immigrants' Protective League

By VIOLA PARADISE

Grace Abbott launched her social-work career in the Immigrants' Protective League (then the League for the Protection of Immigrants) in Chicago in 1908. A job better suited to her could hardly have been found, for it demanded qualities she had in high degree—a quick sympathy for victims of injustice, fearless courage, and a gift for intelligent action.

In those years immigrants thronged into America by the hundreds of thousands. Too

often they were welcomed as just so much brawn, to do the hard labor which natives from older immigrant stocks no longer chose to do. That they might also contribute new values to American life was recognized only by the few. That they offered a wide field for exploitation was, unfortunately, recognized by too many.

The Government made an effort to protect immigrants at Ellis Island, but from the moment they were jammed into the slow immi-

grant trains, they were anybody's prey. When such a train reached Chicago, it unloaded its bewildered cargo of immigrants, few of whom knew English and many of whom were trying to find friends by means of badly written or out-of-date addresses. Because there was no knowing when the trains would arrive, it seldom happened that their friends could meet them.

The immigrants' first experience of Chicago life was to be grabbed by cabmen and expressmen, who loaded them into their vehicles, demanded outrageous fares, and delivered them to their friends, provided these could be found. If their friends were not found, the immigrants were dumped into the street, left to the chance kindness and ingenuity of some passerby. Often they were picked up by the police and taken to jail as vagrants.

Grace Abbott helped to change this. She persuaded the railroads to take some responsibility in the matter and the police department to shepherd arriving immigrants to the building which the League established, where their friends or relatives could call for them, or from which they could be sent home with due protection, or where they could stay for a few days until their friends could be found. It took courage to fight the cabmen and expressmen, a tough lot of racketeers, who threatened to get even but who, finding her unfrightened by threats, capitulated, and presently began coming to her with their own troubles. One cabman, for instance, whose license was suspended for a month upon a League complaint, came to Miss Abbott with his crippled son, urging her to have the license restored so that he could buy crutches for the boy. Miss Abbott sharply refused, told him that if he repeated the offense, the League would recommend a jail sentence, and then, characteristically, herself lent him the money for the crutches.

Grace Abbott's service to immigrants was not limited to preventing the depredations of cabmen; or to tracing lost immigrant girls; or to obtaining regulation of unscrupulous employment agencies, which took large fees and sent their victims half way across the country to nonexistent jobs; or to organizing an em-

ployment service to help immigrants find work; or to working with the leaders of the various foreign groups in Chicago to better the conditions of their countrymen.

Along with these and scores of other services, Grace Abbott began from the first to add up the individual instances of exploitation within the League's experience and to put the facts before the public, so that the community could take steps to prevent the recurrence of abuses. Her study of the practices of employment agencies brought about improvements in the Illinois law regulating such agencies.

The experience with incoming immigrants was used to persuade the Government to take over this work and establish a socially serviceable immigration station in Chicago. And although the results of some of her other studies—such as *The Immigrant in Chicago Courts*—could not be measured so tangibly, she and the group of workers she gathered about her were responsible for many subtle but far-reaching changes in the attitudes toward immigrants as well as for the helping of many thousands of them through difficult and dangerous situations.

Grace Abbott was an indefatigable worker and a fearless crusader, unafraid to make enemies. But though I worked with her for years and thoroughly enjoyed working with her, the pictures which come most fleetly to my mind now have to do not so much with her zest for work—one took that for granted—as with her hearty vitality; her savoring of life in general; her whole-hearted enjoyment of the theater; her pleasure in a good novel; her ready wit—sometimes a sharp, slashing wit; her heat in an argument—and yet it was possible to differ with her and argue a matter out with directness and vigor without fear that the difference of opinion would be carried over into personal relationships; her warm interest in the people she chose to work with her; her affection for them—which, however, never blinded her to their shortcomings nor let them feel for a moment that they could allow the quality of their work to sag; her real kindness; and the fact that she was an interesting and fascinating human being.

## Grace Abbott: Friend of Labor

By WILLIAM GREEN

There have been few persons in public life who have so completely earned and held the confidence and trust of the members of the American Federation of Labor as did Grace Abbott. As Children's Bureau head, Miss Abbott dealt with matters close to our hearts and consciences. Beginning with its first convention the American Federation of Labor has worked to provide for the children of America's workers good homes, good schools, with free textbooks, and protection during premature years through child-labor and compulsory school-attendance laws. The American Federation of Labor joined with those civic groups which sought the creation of a Federal agency to become the administrative center for the promotion of child welfare. As the second chief of this Federal agency, Miss Abbott kept in close touch with our organization upon policy making and administrative principle. She was by nature a true democrat who respected practical experience equally with academic and technical training and who valued human achievements in proportion to their service to human welfare.

Grace Abbott believed the Children's Bureau

should be located in the Department of Labor in order to perform its work most effectively. The Children's Bureau serves the children of wage earners' families and families with small incomes. In order to serve these children policies must be formulated in the light of an understanding of the homes and work-lives of the families of these children. Grace Abbott knew the representatives of labor and was a regular and helpful consultant on problems which concerned child welfare. She sought to coordinate the practical experience of the workers with the technical information of the experts. Never was her administrative ability better tested than in our struggle for Federal legislation to regulate child labor—a struggle yet unfinished. Our completion of this task will be our most fitting testimonial to her work.

On behalf of the American Federation of Labor, it is my privilege to pay tribute to the soundness of Miss Abbott's planning, to the wisdom of her administration, and to the dependable honesty that characterized her relations with the American Federation of Labor. She could at all times be counted on to point the way to human rights and welfare.

We should have a Federal minimum standard for the protection of children, and without that, if we wait for the time to come when it will be brought up to any particular standard, we may have to wait for a whole generation for the protection which science indicates is needed at the present time. And if we enact—phrase it how you will—an amendment which establishes a minimum standard, and allows the State to establish higher and not lower standards, we shall be giving to the children the real advantage of our Federal form of government, and higher local protection.

I cannot see why any State wants to ask to be able to exploit its children, or why it should claim that its rights have been infringed if that is denied them. And we do have throughout the country, changing from time to time, a certain consensus of opinion as to what is the minimum standard.—*Grace Abbott, Hearings on Child-Labor Amendment, January 1923.*

## On the Industrial Front

By SIDNEY HILLMAN

I have had the privilege of knowing Grace Abbott for some 30 years, and know that her contributions toward social betterment have affected the American people at many points. As Chief of the United States Children's Bureau, she promoted the welfare of mothers and children and helped to crystallize what is now universally recognized as an imperative social responsibility. As a fighter for social legislation, she had a large share in the writing of progressive laws on our statute books. As a practical social worker, she enhanced social values and directed activity along basic economic reform. As a teacher and writer, she did much to mold public opinion and train workers in the field of constructive social effort.

I first met Grace Abbott during the memorable strike of the clothing workers in Chicago in 1910. We have met since on numerous occasions, at the birth of the organization with which I am associated—the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America—and other landmarks. One occasion was during the most dramatic struggle of the Chicago clothing workers. Conditions had been intolerable; our organization had just then been launched—its treasury was empty, its friends few, the newspapers biased, the police hostile, the employers set upon its destruction—and the workers found themselves in a desperate conflict against formidable odds. Grace Abbott, then a resident of Hull House, together with Jane Addams and other prominent women, joined the fight. She joined our picket line, helped to collect funds for food and shelter, spoke at our meetings, presented our case to the public,

and appealed to the city administration to arbitrate the strike.

Grace Abbott had recognized the basic issues of the struggle and realized the need for the introduction of orderly industrial-relations machinery in the clothing industry, which had at that time just been making its initial steps and needed support and encouragement. Thus, back in 1910 and later during the strike in 1916, Grace Abbott helped to show that labor disputes are not private encounters between workers and employers, but that they are of profound social and economic import and affect the entire community. She, moreover, helped to show that industrial relations must rest on a firm basis of better understanding and the extension of responsible labor participation in determining the conditions of work.

My last association with Grace Abbott was as a fellow member of the Textile Committee of the Wage and Hour Division of the United States Department of Labor. She served with distinction, just as she had served as social worker in Chicago, as Children's Bureau head in Washington, as member of the numerous social and economic commissions here and abroad, and upon her return to Chicago, during the last 5 years of her life, as teacher and writer. Throughout these varied activities, Grace Abbott came in direct contact with hard facts and root issues which she faced with deep understanding and integrity of purpose. We are all indebted to her for a life devoted to vitalizing our human and social resources and strengthening the movement for a better living.

## Pioneering in Federal Labor Legislation

By ELLEN NATHALIE MATTHEWS

On May 1, 1917, Grace Abbott was appointed director of the Child Labor Division that had just been created in the Children's Bureau to administer the first Federal Child-Labor Law. The law had been passed in September 1916, to become effective a year later. Only the most general provisions for its administration were contained in the act itself, under the terms of which detailed rules and regulations for carrying out its provisions were left to be worked out. Upon Miss Abbott rested the chief responsibility for evolving these plans as well as for putting them into effect. When she took office only 4 months remained of the period between the passage of the law and the date when it was to become operative; on June 3, 1918, 9 months after it went into effect, it was declared unconstitutional.

During this period of only 13 months was planned and set into motion the machinery of the Federal Government's first attempt at a Nation-wide regulation of labor. With no precedent in the way of any previous Federal labor legislation, and with no opportunity during the short span of its existence to revise the program in the light of experience, methods and procedures for the enforcement of the first Federal Child-Labor Law were developed with such promptness in decision and sureness of judgment that in the few months of its operation the program received a thorough test. So effective, indeed, did the methods and procedures devised for its enforcement prove that they were made the basis, so far as legislative provisions allowed, for the enforcement of both the later Federal measures for the regulation of child labor.

In the words of Julia C. Lathrop, then Chief of the Children's Bureau, Miss Abbott was "responsible for the cooperative basis upon which the whole work was founded, the methods of administration, and the clearness and human

understanding of the record of the administration of the law." From a distance of 22 years it is easy to overlook the difficulties confronting this pioneer administrator. That she herself was entirely without experience in the field of labor legislation makes her achievement the more brilliant.

The Federal Child-Labor Law of 1916 embodied what was then an entirely new principle in labor legislation, that of the enforcement of a Federal Nation-wide minimum standard in a field formerly controlled by the divergent standards and administrative practices of the different States, some of them far below the standards set up in the Federal act. Moreover, since the Federal act was, strictly speaking, a regulation of interstate commerce rather than a child-labor measure, it required the development of techniques of enforcement quite different in a number of particulars from those that had been developed in the administration of child-labor laws by the States. Finally, because of the Children's Bureau policy in employing in the administration of the law only qualified persons selected through special civil-service examination, it was not until the spring of 1918 that lists of persons eligible for appointment became available, and the staff had not been completed when the law was declared unconstitutional.

In numerical terms alone, the record of achievement is impressive. With the small and necessarily inexperienced staff at its disposal the Child Labor Division in the brief time in which the law operated examined the applications for certificates of age of more than 25,000 children in 5 States. The difficulties encountered two decades ago in obtaining evidence of age in States where the most usually accepted records of age—transcript of birth or baptismal certificate—were practically nonexistent, are vividly described in Miss Abbott's report

on the administration of the law. They can hardly be imagined. In addition, during this period more than 700 manufacturing establishments and mines in 25 States had been inspected, in which 1,500 children were found employed in violation of the child-labor standards of the Federal act. In eight cases employers pleaded guilty and had been fined for violation of the law, and in most of the other cases where violations had been found prosecution of the employer had been started or was in preparation at the time the law was declared unconstitutional. Persons knowing only the problems involved in obtaining proof of violation of State child-labor laws can have little idea of the difficulties of obtaining evidence of violation of the Federal act, which required not only proof of the illegal employment of children but proof also of the removal and shipment in interstate commerce of goods manufactured in establishments where such children were employed. The record of successful prosecution in the short time of the law's operation is proof of the success with which this problem had been met and solved.

More important achievements in the administration of the act than those numerically measurable are the working out of procedures and practices which the activities listed above served to test and which were destined to prove of permanent value in the administration of future child-labor legislation. Basic to these procedures was the recognition of two principles, first, that the successful enforcement of any child-labor law depended primarily upon the existence of a well-administered system of certifying the ages of employed children, and, second, that the enforcement of a Federal labor law could not succeed except through a genuine working cooperation between Federal and State officials.

All possible use of State enforcement machinery was made in the administration of this Federal statute. State employment or age certificates were accepted for the purposes of the Federal act in all States where the certificates measured up to the standards set by the Federal Government, and all State officials charged with the enforcement of State child-labor laws were commissioned by the Federal Government

to assist in the administration of the Federal act. Both these basic principles of administration have been recognized as far as legal limitations have permitted in the administration of the Federal measures that subsequently have been passed for the control of child labor—namely, the Child-Labor Law of 1918 and the provisions relating to child labor of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 now in effect. Rules and regulations and administrative practices followed in the administration of these laws have been patterned closely upon those promulgated in the administration of the Federal Child-Labor Law of 1916.

The influence of the experience under the first Federal Child-Labor Law did not stop with the various Federal laws. There can be no doubt of its effect, though incalculable, upon the general level of administrative practice in the enforcement of child-labor legislation, especially in the more backward States, in the decade that followed its enactment. This resulted, when the law was in effect, from a desire to bring State standards up to the Federal standard and, later, from the wide dissemination of knowledge as to better standards of administration based on the experience under the Federal law. The dissemination of this knowledge was due in large measure to the writings and speeches of Grace Abbott herself and to her enthusiastic support of measures tending to result in the reenactment of a Federal child-labor law or in improved legislation and administration in the States.

All who knew Miss Abbott as an administrator know how much the success of any enterprise for which she was responsible was peculiarly her own. Always alert to take advantage of what the knowledge and experience of others had shown to be the soundest policies and methods and to choose the best from what others had learned and tried out, her ability to meet new and unsolved problems promptly and surely with new and sure solutions was an equally basic part of her genius in planning and execution. In no other of her many enterprises were her exceptional creative and administrative powers given a better opportunity to function together, I believe, than in her administration of the first Federal Child-

**Labor Law.** In no way were some of her most outstanding qualities more clearly demonstrated—her sureness of judgment, her promptness in decision, her exceptional ease and com-

petence in execution, her effortless ability to impart her own enthusiasm to those who worked with her and to inspire them to their best achievement.

## Grace Abbott: Crusader

By EDWARD KEATING

The Children's Bureau has been peculiarly fortunate in its Chiefs. My Irish mother would have described Julia Lathrop as "a saint on earth." Gentle, cultured, and blessed with a wit which only her intimates were privileged to know, she also had high courage, determination, and marvelous tact in emergencies. She "mothered" the Bureau until it had gained a definite place in public esteem.

Perhaps I am giving my imagination free rein, but, to me, there was something about Grace Abbott which always suggested Joan of Arc.

I recall distinctly the first time I saw and heard her. It was in the Belasco Theater in Washington, in the brave days when we were battling to give women the right to vote. The place was jammed; we were all bubbling over with enthusiasm; and most of the speakers were top-notchers. Then came one comparatively unknown, at least to eastern audiences. Before she had delivered half a dozen sentences, we knew an authentic star had popped above our horizon.

Grace Abbott spoke easily but with the fire of the crusader. She did not underestimate the strength of the barriers that barred the road to success, but she was determined to plow through them, whatever the cost.

She was not in Washington when the battle for the first Federal Child-Labor Law was being waged. To Julia Lathrop and the National Child Labor Committee, led by Owen Lovejoy and the able, devoted, resourceful Dr. McKelway, goes the lion's share of credit for that achievement.

Fortunately, after President Wilson had attached his signature, Grace Abbott assumed the arduous task of administration.

With infinite patience and understanding, she laid the foundations for what was then a unique experiment—to secure the cooperation of the States in the enforcement of a Federal statute which ran counter to the traditions, the prejudices, and, most formidable of all, the selfish business interests of a large section of our country.

That she succeeded to an extraordinary degree is a matter of history. That she would have achieved the goal so dear to her heart, if the Supreme Court had not intervened and nullified the law by a majority of one vote, cannot be questioned by any candid student of the record.

I was privileged to know Grace Abbott for a number of years, and my admiration for her capacity and devotion constantly increased. She was one of the great women of our time.

## Grace Abbott and the Child-Labor Amendment

By MSGR. JOHN A. RYAN

When I thought of referring to Miss Abbott as the ablest and most persuasive of all the advocates of the proposal for an anti-child-labor amendment to the Federal Constitution, the objection occurred to me, "What about Julia Lathrop and Florence Kelley?" After consideration of the activities and achievements of these two devoted spirits, I am still inclined to stand by my original estimate. Grace Abbott's devotion to the amendment did not exceed that of the two just mentioned, but she exercised a unique influence in her advocacy of it. In large measure this was due to the fact that she was Chief of the Children's Bureau in the years when the agitation for the amendment became acute and was a matter of practical politics.

I happened to be a member of the joint committee which endeavored to draft a proposal for a child-labor amendment for the consideration of Congress. That was during the first half of the last decade. Although I did not attend all the meetings of the committee, and although my memory of those that I did attend is somewhat hazy, I have a clear recollection of Miss Abbott's skill and prudence and patience during the discussion of the proposed drafts. Particularly do I recall her objection to the proposal that the Federal Government and the States should have "concurrent jurisdiction" in the enforcement of whatever legislation should be enacted under the amendment.

I mention this merely as an illustration of her active and practical intelligence.

After the adoption by Congress of the resolution for the amendment she applied all the resources of her remarkable mind and all the sincerity of her devoted will to the efforts that were made for its adoption by the States. Although she did not live to see the proposal ratified by the necessary 36 States, before her death she realized that that goal was much nearer than it had been when she began the struggle for it in the depressing 1920's.

Peace to her ashes and to her soul! She was a grand woman. No American carried on better the tradition that we like to think of as American—consideration for the common man and woman and concern for the weak and the lowly. Grace Abbott came from Nebraska; I was born in Minnesota. Her forbears had probably lived in the United States for generations. My father and mother were born in Ireland. Nevertheless, we fought together for many years for the child-labor amendment and for many other measures on behalf of the underprivileged. This instance, which can be duplicated thousands of times in the history of the last 40 years, is not the least of my reasons for having faith that we shall solve our social problems in accord with the principles of justice and for the enduring welfare of our beloved America.

## Grace Abbott: Leader of Women

By MAUD WOOD PARK

During my years in Washington the group of women's organizations most closely connected with Grace Abbott's work were those represented on two subcommittees of the Women's Joint Congressional Committee: The subcommittee on the Sheppard-Towner Act for

the promotion of the welfare and hygiene of maternity and infancy; and the subcommittee which was supporting the proposed child-labor amendment to the Constitution.

Like the other members of those subcommittees, I came to know and to depend upon Miss

Abbott's power of initiative, her store of accurate information, and her persistent courage. Whenever she was to be a speaker in behalf of one of the measures in which we were interested, we all sat back, with minds at ease, because we knew that we could count on her making a lucid, straightforward statement of the case, a statement lightened by flashes of humor and fortified by all the necessary references. Unexpected questions and obvious opposition never confused or intimidated her. Her earnestness and evident sincerity often brought the doubting to our side and sometimes convinced even those who had been hostile at the start.

Among my host of memories of conferences, meetings, and Congressional interviews and hearings in which she had an important part, two are particularly vivid.

The first of these is of the evening on which the Senate voted for a 2-year extension of the Sheppard-Towner Act. Throughout the debate, which lasted for several hours, Miss Abbott sat with the members of our subcommittee in one of the galleries of the Senate. Again and again, Senator Sheppard and Senator Curtis sent for her and a few of us in order that they might report some change in the situation or ask our opinion about a new legislative possibility. At last it came to the point when our strongest supporters in the Senate assured us that the only chance to get favorable action on the bill was to consent to a proviso for the expiration of the act at the end of 2 years. Standing just outside one of the doors to the floor of the Senate, we women and the friendly Senators alike turned to Grace Abbott for the final word. There could have

been no better proof of our faith in the soundness of her judgment than the unanimity with which we accepted her reluctant assent to the proviso which we had hoped to avert.

My other particularly striking remembrance concerns a hearing on the proposed child-labor amendment before the Judiciary Committee of the Senate, a committee usually made up of Senators who are authorities on constitutional law. While Miss Abbott was speaking, she was interrupted several times by questions from members of the Committee. For the most part those questions were veiled objections to specifying 18 years as the age up to which the Congress was to be empowered to legislate against child labor. Miss Abbott, who was uncompromising in her advocacy of 18 years as the age limit, did not hesitate to correct a misstatement of one of the Senators.

Thereupon another Senator inquired with mock indignation, "Does Miss Abbott mean to imply that she knows more about this subject than one of the Senate's foremost constitutional lawyers?"

"Yes," replied Miss Abbott, in no wise abashed, "for the Senator has never had responsibility for seeing that a child-labor law is properly enforced, and I have."

The committee fell to laughing at her candid answer and later, when the majority report was presented to the Senate, it favored the age limit of 18. As usual Miss Abbott's straightforward methods had won support.

"Grace Abbott is as forthright and upstanding as a field of Nebraska corn," someone wrote of her at that time. No better description could be given of the qualities which made women turn to her for leadership.

*If a declaration of independence were to be written today, American women would ask that in the enumeration of the objects for which governments are instituted the welfare of children should head the list; and the American men would agree. It is time that with characteristic American directness we undertake to realize that object now.—Grace Abbott, Annual Report of Children's Bureau, 1923.*

## Pioneering in Maternal and Child-Health Services

By S. JOSEPHINE BAKER, M. D.

The Sheppard-Towner Act will always be connected with the names of those two great women: Julia C. Lathrop and Grace Abbott. Julia Lathrop conceived the plan for Federal aid to the States for maternal and infant hygiene and as Chief of the Children's Bureau saw the bill through until the final stages. Miss Abbott planned and carried out the administration of the act.

It was my good fortune to be closely associated with the Children's Bureau during the greater part of this time, first as a volunteer and later as a member of Grace Abbott's staff with the somewhat ponderous title of "Specialist in Maternal and Infant Hygiene," and so those days and years bring back a heart-warming memory of my association with those two outstanding figures. They were fighting days. Days of long and exciting debates with committees of the Senate and the House; days of rough questioning and even rougher answers; days of antagonism on the part of organized medicine; days of refreshing aid from individual pediatricians and obstetricians; and days of great joy when the act was finally passed and signed by President Harding on November 23, 1921. The victory was ours! The funds authorized by the act were not to be available until March 1922, and then, for the first time in the history of this country, mothers and young children were to benefit through the cooperation of Federal and State agencies.

To attempt any adequate summary of Grace Abbott's work, her unfailing optimism in the face of great difficulties, and her work for the health and welfare of the mothers and children of this country is too long a story to be told here. Maternity and child-hygiene bureaus or divisions had been created in 33 States by the beginning of 1921. During that and the following year, 14 more were established, and in

1925 Hawaii followed suit. The total amount of money made available for distribution to the States on a yearly basis was approximately \$1,000,000. The act was in force for 5 years with a later extension for 2 more years. Then, the Sheppard-Towner Act became a part of our history, and upon its foundations was erected the cooperative Federal-State program for maternal and child health under the Social Security Act.

The work and efforts in administering this act were a truly pioneer accomplishment. Advisory committees were formed, publicity was stimulated, and State programs were carefully considered. In all, 2,294 permanent child-health centers, 311 permanent prenatal centers, and 373 permanent combined prenatal and child-health centers were established and the States reported that 4,000,000 infants and preschool children and about 700,000 expectant mothers had been reached. It was truly a monumental task, and through it all Grace Abbott stood out as the inspiration and the final arbiter.

To pay a proper tribute to Grace Abbott for the part she played in helping the mothers and babies of this country is difficult and yet, in the surety of its purpose, it stands out as one of the most magnificent accomplishments in our history. I have lost a dear friend in her passing; the country has lost an outstanding pioneer whose life was dedicated to the welfare of all children. None of us who knew her doubt her unique quality of keen foresight, her administrative ability, her vast and secure knowledge, her personal charm, and, above all, her great gift of humanity. With myriad accomplishments to her credit, I think the one for which she will be longest remembered is her successful battle to insure life and good health to the women and to the children of this country.

## Grace Abbott: Administrator

By HON. JAMES J. DAVIS

One of the most important jobs in Washington, so far as the future of America is concerned, passed from the able administrative hands of Julia Lathrop to those of Grace Abbott late in August 1921. Miss Lathrop, who for 9 years had guarded the destinies of 40,000,000 American children, expressed genuine admiration for Miss Abbott and declared that she had earned her new position through sheer ability and merit. Miss Abbott was a thoroughly energetic and businesslike person—one of the most capable administrators I have ever known.

During the period of nearly 10 years that Miss Abbott and I were associated together in the Department of Labor I came to have an increasing admiration for the intelligence and creative enthusiasm that she brought to her work. She was among those chiefly responsible for the planning and successful conclusion of the great White House Conference on Child Health and Protection of 1930. Her part in that conference and her determination to carry through the work to which she devoted her life have not been sufficiently appreciated.

Early in the work of the Children's Bureau the close connection between the welfare of the child and that of the mother was made clear. Not only was it found that motherless babies were much more likely to die in infancy than babies who were cared for by their own mothers, but also that motherhood brought with it in this country greater probability of death than in any, except 2, of 12 foreign countries.

Miss Abbott directed the preparation of

scientific studies of child health, child labor and vocational guidance, recreation, dependency, delinquency, and neglect. She directed the assembling and interpretation of current statistics and information in the field of child welfare. She gave leadership in the preparation and distribution of popular and scientific bulletins on maternal, infant, and child care and on child welfare. She cooperated with State child-welfare commissions, State and county child-welfare bureaus, and private child-health and child-caring agencies through consultation or joint undertakings.

At the conclusion of this 10-year period of work, the Children's Bureau under the direction of Miss Abbott was able to report that infants born in 1930 in this country had a much better chance to survive than those born a decade earlier, that greatly increased resources for the care of mothers, infants, and preschool children were available, that marked progress had been made in regard to the mental hygiene of childhood, and that education of parents in methods of child care and training had been notably developed. It was estimated that 25,000 of the babies born in 1930 and surviving the first year of life would have died under the conditions prevailing in 1921.

From this short statement it may be truly inferred that Grace Abbott was much more than a Government official. She was the friend and savior of thousands of little children, a bearer of glad tidings for mothers in poverty and distress, and a national leader whose work will endure as long as the Nation to which she dedicated her life shall last.

*Children suffer the most serious permanent losses in periods of depression, and should be the first to be considered in planning remedial measures.—*  
Grace Abbott, Annual Report of Children's Bureau, 1931.

## Grace Abbott and the State Welfare Departments

By WILLIAM J. ELLIS

We in the field of public-welfare administration know of Grace Abbott's work to give dependent and delinquent children a place in a world which too often forgets that what its children are today it will itself be tomorrow. The quality in Miss Abbott which beyond anything else made her work possible was her flaming courage.

Courage is a wonderful thing to behold in the heat of conflict or under the stress of great emotion. It is still greater when it is exhibited as in Miss Abbott's case, in the everyday affairs of her life's work. It was Miss Abbott's happy faculty to make the ordinary business of her life very extraordinary, not by causing herself to be the center of her world, but by dramatizing that which lay closest to her heart, the welfare of children.

As public-welfare administrators we know how she gave us of the fire of her bravery and determination. We know that that was true in her post as Chief of the Federal Children's Bureau as well as afterward in her editorial work on the *Social Service Review* and her teaching of public-welfare administration. Her passion was the pursuit of truth with a singleness of purpose which revived the spirits of those who wavered. Having found truth, it was her joy not merely to defend it but to lead it into the battle as a weapon of offense in behalf of children against cruelty, against injustice, against oppression wherever these might be found or whoever might be their protagonists.

In her relationships with State welfare departments she had the faculty of securing the cooperation of the State without the exercise of arbitrary authority; she infused a new spirit into the relationships of Federal and State agencies which continues today in the field of child-welfare service. Not the least of her achievements in this field was her great faculty for seeing the State's point of view and, without compromising essential principles, of meeting that point of view in her work. In this

aspect Miss Abbott well knew that true collaboration was impossible unless there were the meeting of minds each of which had the respect of the other and a common goal.

It was Miss Abbott's great regret that she was unable to attend the 1939 session of the White House conference on child welfare, dedicated to children in a democracy. Nevertheless, her influence was felt at the conference and with characteristic insight she sent a message to the initial session counseling that meeting not to spend too much effort in defining terms but to go at once into a discussion of the many needs yet to be met in order that the lot of the friendless child be bettered.

Carrying over that spirit of Federal-State cooperation which she practiced herself and required of others, Miss Abbott called at that conference for leadership from both private and public agency. Not in her mind could either agency preempt the field or claim all the credit.

Characteristic of Miss Abbott's life was one of her last achievements. This was the production of her two-volume work, *The Child and the State*. These volumes retrace from colonial times to today the path along which efforts have been made to provide for the well-being of the child. Janus-like, the book looks not only backward but forward; it is history with a challenge. It was not Miss Abbott's purpose to pause for a survey of the field with any idea of taking satisfaction for the progress which the world has made in the treatment of children from the earliest halting attempts of the colonists to help the orphan and the poor. Rather, it was her purpose to have us face the future with new hope and fresh inspiration, confident that we, as State welfare administrators particularly, face a new era in the conservation of child welfare and happiness.

To Miss Abbott, perhaps more than to anyone else, the State public-welfare workers owe the idea that the child is, after all, their major consideration and that no law, no custom, no

way of life, no thinking which subordinates the child to any material thing will stand the test of time.

Her qualities of courage, of fortitude, of jealousy for the truth, of cooperation without essential compromise, defy definition. We

often give them unthinking lip service. And yet it is exactly to these qualities, no less than to Miss Abbott's exhaustive knowledge of the child-welfare field, its history, its techniques, and its goal that the State welfare administrators owe a supreme debt of gratitude.

## Getting the Job Done

By LUDWELL DENNY

Washington correspondents, who have learned with good reason to look down on most politicians, looked up to Grace Abbott. That was not strange. She knew her job, her zeal was selfless, and she played fair. Such a person gives respect and gets it.

If there have been public servants with more vision and courage, I have not known them. But she had more than those qualities of the crusader—it was her rare genius to combine with them a simple humanness. She was not puffed-up, she was never stiff-necked. She had the common touch, which is so uncommon.

Even those virtues of the great public ser-

vant did not alone explain her effectiveness. She also had a cool efficiency, a practical sense, which often was the difference between well-meaning futility and getting the job done.

There was nothing of the amateur about Grace Abbott. She had learned the political traps. She was never satisfied with mere good intentions or the emotional glow of heroics. In purpose and in method she was the skilled civil servant—one of the greatest in our time.

To do the Washington job so well and so long and then to inspire others in her brilliantly efficient way was her achievement and her monument.

## Grace Abbott: News-Maker

By BESS FURMAN

In the forefront of women's work for the public good in the Federal Government was Grace Abbott, an initiator, a news-maker. When I came to Washington from the prairies, it was inevitable that my first and best lessons in national journalism—and in practical politics, too—should have been learned in the various offices which she occupied as Chief of

the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor.

Grace Abbott pioneered in the things that really counted. She met the press freely and fairly, and with a great gift of evaluating facts, a complete common sense, an easy humor. An interview with her restored my soul like a visit home.

## Grace Abbott: Humanitarian

By HOMER FOLKS

In an all-too-short career Grace Abbott held a number of positions, educational, executive, and administrative, in public service and in voluntary agencies, and filled them all with notable success. Seemingly varied, they offered her a continuity of growth and of widening usefulness in her chosen career of social welfare. She succeeded in all these efforts, and passed quickly and with no loss of momentum from one to another, because to her they were all necessary factors in any program of making life more tolerable for those to whom it seemed to offer least promise.

She was deeply interested in the education and training of social workers, in developing standards and methods of individual service and community betterment, in rescuing public welfare from the hands of political (not social) workers, and in framing and promoting good social legislation and obtaining adequate public funds and citizen backing to carry such law into effect. But she never made the mistake of seeing any or all of these things as ends in themselves. The means never ob-

scured the end to her. She was a welfare statesman and never merely a technician.

It was my pleasure in 1931 to be the spokesman of the National Institute of Social Sciences in conferring the gold medal of the Institute upon Grace Abbott. At that time she had for 10 years filled the difficult position of Chief of the Children's Bureau with a breadth of thought, a comprehensiveness of view, and a humanitarian spirit worthy of the high intent of Congress and the President in creating the Bureau and of the inclusiveness with which they stated its powers and duties.

She had an eye for reality and an instinct for achievement. She showed how to be a chief of an important bureau without becoming a bureaucrat. Though she did not have her ear to the ground, she had her eye at all times on the average American family home, in which the children of today are being prepared for the terrific responsibilities of tomorrow, and her constructive imagination, sympathetic understanding, and gifted mind were constantly at work on the removal of the handicaps, troubles, and misfortunes which limit that home in its creative work for the citizens of tomorrow.

Sometimes when I get home at night in Washington, I feel as though I had been in a great traffic jam. The jam is moving toward the Hill where Congress sits in judgment on all the administrative agencies of the Government. In that traffic jam there are all kinds of vehicles moving up toward the Capitol.

There are all kinds of conveyances, for example, that the Army can put into the street—tanks, gun carriages, trucks, the dancing horses of officers \* \* \*. There are the hayricks and the binders and the ploughs and all the other things that the Department of Agriculture manages to put into the streets \* \* \* the handsome limousines in which the Department of Commerce rides. To be sure, the limousines are looking a little bit shabbier this year \* \* \*.

I am not going to describe all the vehicles in this traffic jam tonight. I am not going to tell you about the barouches in which the Department of State rides with such dignity, or the noisy patrol in which the Department of Justice officials sometimes appear. Without my saying more you will agree that it seems to be a traffic presenting special hazards.

It seems so to me as I stand on the sidewalk watching it become more congested and more difficult, and then because the responsibility is mine and I must, I take a very firm hold on the handles of the baby carriage and I wheel it into the traffic.—*Grace Abbott in New Measures of Values, Journal of the National Institute of Social Sciences, 1931-34, vol. XVI-XIX, pp. 9-10.*

## Grace Abbott: Social Inventor

By Hon. FELIX FRANKFURTER

In common with every student of social legislation and public administration I had to follow the efforts and achievements of Grace Abbott as being among the most outstanding in American sociological endeavors. But as one of the counsel of the National Consumers' League, engaged in helping to draft social measures and to support them in the courts, and an official concerned with industrial relations during the World War, it was my good fortune to become closely acquainted with Grace Abbott and to see her in action, as it were, for nearly 25 years. As part of my official duty it fell to me to see her initiate the administration of the first Federal Child-Labor Law, while that law was in force, and after its invalidation continue so much of its application and practice as was rendered possible by writing a clause against child labor in all governmental contracts.

I wish much that the whole story of this administration by her of protections against the exploitation of child workers could be recorded for posterity by social historians like the Hammonds or the Webbs. I do not believe that American experience would disclose a finer illustration of the rare art of public administration. I do not mean to minimize the triumphs of the human mind as revealed by mechanical inventions, but social inventions

apparently entail much subtler gifts, for they are so much rarer. The manner in which Grace Abbott translated the blueprints of social policies into effective operating institutions for the benefit of society at large made her work, in every true sense of the phrase, that of social invention.

It is idle to attempt an analysis of the separate factors of the sum total that produces a Grace Abbott. She had, of course, a disciplined mind; knew that the world did not begin yesterday and would not end tomorrow; saw things, in other words, in the perspective of history; but had a pertinacious zeal which did not allow her either through cynicism or comfort to believe that as things have been they must remain. She had, in addition, to a rare degree disinterestedness and indifference to the share of her own ego in the cosmos, and the fruitful humor that so often goes with real disinterestedness.

No matter how long she might have lived she would have gone too soon. Happily she lived long enough to leave a real residuum of accomplishments in the pioneering field which she had chosen for her activity. Above all, she left an example of the solid regard for details and of the largeness of spirit in which details are employed in the service of great human ends.

*At present we pay too much for the care and punishment of criminals and too little for the prevention of crime. Scientific research is the foundation on which a program of prevention must be built.—Grace Abbott, Annual Report of Children's Bureau, 1926.*

## Grace Abbott and Education for Social Work

By SOPHONISBA P. BRECKINRIDGE

Grace Abbott was a great teacher. She had exact knowledge of law, governmental organization, labor economics, and administrative relationships. Everyone recognized the assurance with which she handled her material and the scientific exactness with which she approached and in fact entered what was debatable territory in a no-man's land ready and waiting for development. This distinction between the knowledge that had come from the experience of administration and the further information needed for developing the work was illustrated by her reports when director of the Immigrants' Protective League and the investigations that supplemented these reports, a spirit of inquiry related to her work that took her on her first trip to Europe, to Bohemia and Hungary, Croatia and Galicia, whence were coming her clients at the League whom she wanted better to understand.

A fine sense of humor and an extraordinary democracy of attitude made themselves felt in the classroom. This democratic attitude, together with an untarnished and unshadowed integrity, gave life. The democratic attitude showed itself toward students (they were fellow students in new fields of educational effort), toward the governmental authorities, local, State, Federal, or international—and especially toward the individuals in whose behalf public-welfare authorities, in fact all governmental authorities, are set up.

Grace Abbott came as professor of public-welfare administration to the School of Social Service Administration only 5 years ago, but she had been concerned with the development of education for the law and she contributed to the curriculum of the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy and the earlier experiment in the university which was called the Philanthropic Service Division of the School of Commerce and Administration of the University of Chicago. She had been for 30 years interested in the field of education for social

work and in training for social research and social investigation. As Chief of the Children's Bureau, first Julia Lathrop and then Grace Abbott had found that a school of social service was an ideal place for training social investigators who, by civil-service tests, qualified for work on the Bureau staff.

She contributed to the curriculum of the school new courses which took the students beyond the boundaries of welfare and social work into fields of health, education, and labor. One cannot say that her chief interest here was that of the child; yet all the schools of social work and welfare agencies are grateful that she was able to complete and publish her monumental book of documents entitled, "The Child and the State."

The students appreciated what she had to give. The limits of the class were the limits of available space in the classroom. And an experience in one of her classes gave the student a sense of great enrichment. It gave, however, something more. There was always the question of what was beyond, and so the student passed directly to an attitude of independent inquiry that meant research and investigation. These qualities of demanding exact knowledge, of democratic attitude, of independence and courage in experience, led into research and experimentation and gave students patience and courage and a democratic attitude toward questions of governmental organization as well as toward personal service. It was not an accident that her work and her students' interest spread into the field of health and industry and education in relation to social work and public welfare. The result was that topics undertaken under her direction covered a wide range of public organization.

In this wide range of interest, too, there was constant realization that any plan should contemplate something that could be administered. Her experience as an administrator illuminated all her discussion of relationships between the

Federal Government and the State and local jurisdictions, while all topics were likewise seen from an international or world point of view. To her students, the States and local units mean departments of public welfare, directors of labor and industry, medical experts dealing with questions of concern to all the people of the State. It is an attitude

wholly inconsistent with that of the bureaucrat and is that of demanding that all agencies of government be called on to render the special service required for "the least of these," the child, the alien, or the destitute and workless man or woman. It is an attitude challenging to all professional education which claims to prepare for a service in behalf of those in need.

## Grace Abbott as a Teacher

By JAMES BROWN 4TH

At the University of Chicago Grace Abbott taught three courses to the graduate students in the School of Social Service Administration: Public-welfare administration, social insurance, and the child and the state. To the teaching of these courses she brought a combination of scholarship and experience which made these classes unforgettable.

Her lectures on the historical aspects of a movement were as alive and brilliant as those dealing with the recent developments in which she so frequently had played an active part. The student who came expecting to listen comfortably to a series of reminiscences of her own experiences in the field was quickly disillusioned. Her wide experience was constantly drawn on, but in a manner much more profitable for the student. This took the form of a critical appraisal of the legislation and reports, which constituted the body of the material of the courses, in terms of whether the law would achieve the ends sought or whether the proposed form of organization was administratively practical. One of the valuable results of her training was the development in the student of an appreciation for well-drafted legislation and sound forms of administrative organization.

Students were always eager to gain admission to her courses and the classes were very large; but although one might occasionally wish to be, no one was lost sight of. The classes were conducted in an old-fashioned way for graduate courses. There were regular assignments, and students were called upon in

alphabetical order to recite. However this system might work in other hands, it yielded remarkable results under Miss Abbott's skillful direction. She had the ability to frame her questions so that they not only tested the student's knowledge of the material, but at the same time encouraged discussion which was of benefit to the class as a whole. It was never considered worth while to improvise in Grace Abbott's class, for exposure was certain to follow. On the other hand, the student who was in possession of the facts, but who disagreed with her conclusions concerning them always felt free to express this difference of opinion. It should be said, however, that he usually emerged from the ensuing debate converted to her point of view.

One of the characteristics of her classes that every student will recall was the lively tempo at which they were conducted. From the time she strode briskly down the aisle, pausing just long enough to toss her wraps in the general direction of a vacant seat before mounting the platform, until the closing bell which always came as a surprise, the classes moved along with vigor and dispatch. Another feature that will be remembered was the frequency with which the entire class enjoyed a good laugh—often at her expense. Once, in the midst of a discussion of the necessity for including a broad definition of "delinquent" in a juvenile-court law, she recalled with a chuckle that it was fortunate that there had been no such laws when she was a child, and went on to relate how she had envied the right-of-way workers

on the railroad who, in their hand cars, sped up and down the tracks that ran near her home. The temptation to experiment with this form of transportation finally proved irresistible, and one evening after the crews had gone home she "borrowed" a hand car and with her brother made off across the Nebraska prairie.

Students who had the opportunity to do research under her supervision were particularly fortunate, because they not only learned the disciplines of scholarly research but had the

inspiration to produce the best they knew. It is impossible to explain the "lift" one got from a conference with Grace Abbott, but part of it was certainly due to the affection in which she was held.

Those of us who were her students are grateful for the distinguished privilege we have enjoyed, and perhaps more than anyone else realize the loss that her death means to incoming students in the field of professional social work.

## Grace Abbott<sup>1</sup>

Grace Abbott stood in every way for the American ideal of what a woman might become and should become if fate and her own personality and ambition made it possible for her. It is true that nature gives to only a few women such a personality, such quiet charm, such complete sincerity and honesty, such courage, and such rare judgment. The point is not that we have such women—we shall and should have more as time goes on—but that we want them, that the road to preferment is open to them, and that we do not propose to deprive this country of the best talent among women because of their sex.

I like to think of Grace Abbott at her desk where she was for 13 years head of the Children's Bureau in succession to that other saint, Julia Lathrop. She seemed to me, on my all too rare visits to her office, a remarkably clear and cool-headed administrator, just the right person in the right place. She was a great reformer, but not so much of the propagandizing type. She could speak warmly, at times almost eloquently. But like Jane Addams her forte was in quiet, steady spade-work, in laying foundations and then building upon them. She did not speak a lot or make the headlines often—the headlines would have seized upon her if those who write them had been aware of what Grace Abbott was accomplishing and how she was growing herself. She left office in 1934 to become professor of public-welfare administration in the School of Social Service of the University of Chicago. She was only 60 years old when she died; plainly she had given too much of herself and her strength in those long years of heavy responsibility. Senator Davis of Pennsylvania told the Senate that he had never known a more capable administrator and that she was "a benefactor of the entire Nation." Senator Wagner called her "a remarkable and great woman," and Senator Robert La Follette, Jr.,

declared she was one of the country's ablest women and one of the finest women he had ever known. And still these words do not tell the whole story!

Yet it is not as a Government official that I usually think of Grace Abbott, though I am aware that her reputation as such had led to her being considered by the League of Nations for the vitally important new position at the head of its combined departments dealing with health, opium, and social service. I cannot forget that she was a great authority in her field of social service, notably in that of the immigrants. In 1920-21 she was executive secretary of the Illinois Immigrants' Commission. Her books on *The Immigrant* and *The Community* and *The Immigrant in Massachusetts* are outstanding, but even more so is her two-volume study called *The Child and the State*, which she was able to publish only last December. The list of the causes to which she gave herself without rest is too long to publish here, but the debt of the anti-child-labor movement to her is beyond acknowledgment, and her contributions to the struggle against infant and maternal mortality and juvenile delinquency among the most notable. Indeed her pen was extraordinarily prolific even when she was at the head of the Children's Bureau. There her work was very considerably pioneering—even after Julia Lathrop. She put it on a secure and a scientific basis by all those years of the most careful and thoughtful building.

In all this she was a follower and a pupil of Jane Addams, whom she adored, as did all who worked with Miss Addams. What a great group of human beings has come out of Hull House! The spirit of that place created by Jane Addams has influenced for their good a wonderful group of men and women, which only goes to show again that, if you have anything worth while in you, devoting your life to the welfare of the depressed and downtrodden is about the best investment that you can possibly make.

<sup>1</sup> From *The Nation*, July 29, 1939, "Issues and Men," by Oswald Garrison Villard, p. 127.

## Grace Abbott and the International Labor Organization

By JOHN G. WINANT

In her contacts with the International Labor Office, Grace Abbott made an indelible impression as one of the outstanding delegates at the Conference. Something of the contribution which she made to the International Labor Conferences she attended is suggested in the following statement.

Miss Abbott's association with the International Labor Organization dates practically from its inception. She was one of the few Americans who took part in the first International Labor Conference, which was held in Washington, D. C., in October 1919. At this Conference she served as secretary for the Commission on the Employment of Children which drafted the first I. L. O. Convention dealing with the minimum age for the admission of children to industry.

Later, after the United States had become a member of the International Labor Organization, Miss Abbott in 1935 attended the International Labor Conference at Geneva as a Government delegate. At this conference she served as chairman of the Committee on Unemployment of Young Persons, which drafted a recommendation urging that the minimum age for leaving school and entering employment should be raised to 15 years. Largely through her individual effort it received the support of the Conference.

Although from her position as Chief of the United States Children's Bureau, her interests were naturally concerned with the welfare of children, they embraced a much wider field. Or, perhaps seeing the problem of children in its broadest aspects and its relation to other social problems caused her interests and activities to extend to those larger spheres of influence.

She was one of the active supporters of the resolution concerning workers' nutrition which became the basis for the work which has since been conducted by the International Labor

Office in this field. She championed the cause of women—their right to work, their freedom of opportunity for professional and civic advancement. She did this not only in their immediate interest but for the general good. "The work of women adds to the wealth of the world," she stated in discussing the report of the Director of the International Labor Office, claiming that a richer and more abundant life is made possible for men, women, and children by such efforts.

In 1937 Miss Abbott again attended the annual Conference of the International Labor Organization as a Government delegate. At this Conference—the last which she attended—Miss Abbott served as reporter for the Committee on Minimum Age, whose duty was the revision of the two conventions concerning the minimum age for admission of children to employment, previously adopted by the I. L. O. with relation to industry and agriculture.

Grace Abbott possessed exceptional qualities of leadership. Those associated with her recognized her ability, her clear, incisive intellect, and all felt her integrity and force of character. She was responsible for the resolution adopted by the 1937 Conference outlining the principles which should be recognized in connection with the legal, social, and industrial position of women if they were to protect themselves against industrial exploitation and realize the fullest possibilities of individual development. In urging this, Miss Abbott pointed out, "We can hope for peace and substantial progress only when there is freedom and justice for all."

Her personality, her broad sympathy, insight, and understanding won for her staunch friendships as well as respect and admiration. To her many friends and admirers in the International Labor Office her passing brings a sense of keen personal loss. There was something heroic about her courage and determination,

her loyalty to the causes in which she believed, her singleness of purpose, her directness and unflinching candor. She gave her life and talents unstintingly to help others—the under-

privileged and the exploited. She was one of the outstanding social workers in the world. We are richer, and every child in America has a fairer chance, because she has lived.

## Grace Abbott's Work With the League of Nations

By CHARLOTTE WHITTON

The people of the United States knew Grace Abbott as one of the most useful women of her generation, but it is doubtful whether they realized the degree to which her service contributed to the betterment of child life throughout the world of her day. Her vision knew no boundaries, and in her the humanitarian sense burned like the patriot's fire in souls of lesser scope. "The Child and the State," she called the work which it was given her to finish as her own life closed, but the child and all humanity is more truly the theme which played its vibrant undertone throughout that study and throughout her tireless life.

The child of all states and races called incessantly to her fine, clear mind, in all her years at the Children's Bureau, and latterly, even in the kaleidoscopic grasp which she brought to her work in the public-welfare field, there was constantly present the fundamental concept so well phrased by Katharine Lenroot, her friend, assistant, and successor—"Since the child is the medium through which civilized life is carried on from one generation to the next, his well-being becomes a primary concern of organized society."

That was the vision which Grace Abbott saw—all mankind united about the care and nurturing of the child as the center of all life—the restatement and social application of the supreme truth of Christianity. At the close of the war, into which 10 million lives had been cast as sand into the sea, she was Julia Lathrop's first lieutenant in seeking to bring the nations of the world together in protection of the child life which would redeem our generation's loss.

In the face of the impossible the Washington and Regional Conferences on Standards of Child Welfare in 1919 materialized, and no richer findings have yet superseded those conclusions. When, following the Treaty of Versailles and the Covenant of the League of Nations, the International Labor Organization and the Section of the League on Opium and Social Questions were set up, these two indefatigable women were determined that child life and social welfare, as they were being visualized on this continent, must find their place within the evangel of the new brotherhood of nations.

With the keen and sympathetic cooperation of Dr. William F. Snow and the American Social Hygiene Association, they were able to assure the participation of the United States in the committee appointed to supervise the international conventions for the suppression of the traffic in women and children. Miss Abbott, by now Chief of the Children's Bureau, was a natural appointee to this committee; but, as any one who knew her would surmise, she could but shortly abide a negative approach toward any social problem and early set about throwing down the narrow limitations which had hitherto restricted international effort in this field. Through Dr. Snow's generalship and her forthrightness, the League Committee became the medium through which the tremendous world study of the traffic in women and children was undertaken, directed by Bascom Johnson and financed by funds from the United States to the sum of \$125,000. It has already resulted in effective international action against the nefarious traffic on

this continent, in the Far East, in France, and in Central Europe.

Miss Abbott's quick perception, directness of thought, and forthrightness of speech were always the dread of certain of the delegates to the Committee, as they were the joy and hope of colleagues in a common cause. She was honest and gave no quarter: Her humor would stay where she forebore to flay. As a delegate once said, "Those delegates with a fish to fry would as soon see the devil come in that door as Miss Abbott. She calls a spade a spade and a liar a liar, and doesn't disguise her meaning." She never made nor sought battle unnecessarily at the international table, but she hated intrigue and despised indirection. She called the play and played within its rules.

Miss Abbott drove consistently for the broadening of the work of the Social Questions Section. She strove to have the Committee on Traffic in Women and Children enlarged, and an additional group of experts named to sit with it as "assessors." When the Council approved the appointment of one assessor from the Western Hemisphere she journeyed to Ottawa and also interviewed Pan American representatives, all of whom had been asked to nominate. As a result three assessors were named to the new Committee, Julia Lathrop coming from the United States. Almost without exception, however, the international assessors came from fields of general effort. Their contribution was always debated by most

of the Government delegates, and finally the Committee was enlarged to take in Canada and certain of the South American countries. Government delegates from India and more European countries were added and the assessors dropped, except as temporary appointees in connection with specific questions. The scope of the work of the Committee has been broadened, and its name changed to the Advisory Committee on Social Questions.

Miss Abbott lived to see part of her vision of that brave and unselfish new world of 1919 dwindle into eclipse, but with that courage of heart which was hers, she accepted rebuff but not defeat. She looked to a new realignment, and ultimately to international collaboration in humanitarian effort, divorced entirely from the intricacies of international politics. She and Miss Lathrop both, even to the last months of their lives, never lost faith in their vision splendid, that about the central fact of the dignity and divinity of human life, men of all states and races would yet find a common brotherhood in which peace and well-being would eternally abide. In that belief each lived and served, not only her own land and day, but the children of all nations and of days yet to come.

Grace Abbott has passed beyond the sight of men, and her own country mourns a noble woman, but in the land to the north and in nations beyond the seas, there are those who knew her not, who yet will "praise God for making her, and her for all she made."

## The Economic Basis of Child Welfare<sup>1</sup>

By GRACE ABBOTT

How are we to insure to children what should be their inalienable right to health and physical vigor? I realize this is not an easy question to answer. It raises many questions about which there is some disagreement.

Unquestionably a Nation-wide program for making available to parents the services of child-health centers is greatly needed, and to this there should be no opposition. I am not going to undertake to discuss what the full program should be. I am, however, suggesting that at least so far as children are concerned we must repudiate the theory that health is in the same category as rugs or cars, of which a family buys the kind it can afford to pay for, and accept the doctrine that the interest and welfare of the children must be our only test of what we shall or shall not do in promoting the health of children.

It seems to me reasonable to say that a satisfactory test of our whole recovery program is what it will do for children. If recovery means return to predepression conditions, then I know what that means for many children. Let us take the children of coal miners as an example.

Long before 1929 the depression came to the mining villages. This industry furnished a particularly flagrant example of a planless economy which took its annual toll of the health and welfare of the children of the miners. \* \* \* There was always the greatest insecurity. The mechanization of the mines and the importation of more workers than the operation of the mines required were producing widespread unemployment before 1929. War or strikes might increase the local demand for coal but, like the wheat farmers, the mine operators had pushed our production of coal

far beyond our capacity to sell, and the developing use of electric power and oil have increased the difficulties.

What is finally done about coal in the United States is a subject of vital interest to the owners of coal mines and to the miners and to all who purchase coal, but it is also of vital interest to the hundreds of thousands of children whose fathers were miners but who now are catalogued in our social planning as "stranded populations."

Other examples are all about us. They would furnish further proof of the fact that the burden of poverty which has been laid on the backs of children is not one but many burdens which can be removed by different methods. Housing will be solved one way, milk and the other protective foods will be assured in another, health in another. Progress toward security will require better wages and security against unemployment. What I am pleading for is that in our approach to all these problems the interests of children weigh more heavily in the balance than individual profits.

The welfare of children requires the development of social services—and I use that term to describe all services provided by the community—schools, health services, playgrounds, and child protection, as well as provision for the dependent and the delinquent. Such services are costly, but they create social values far beyond the money outlay.

Those of you who were born just about the time when the World War began have heard international good will preached and seen international suspicion and hatred govern international relations ever since you can remember. For 5 years you have seen the destruction of values which a war against destitution has brought. \* \* \* Injustice and cruelty to children are as old as the world. We have made some progress. We see these ways more clearly now than in the past; and with clearer

<sup>1</sup> From the commencement address at New Jersey College for Women, New Brunswick, N. J., June 2, 1934. This was the last public speech made by Miss Abbott as Chief of the Children's Bureau.

vision we can do more, go farther. Without apology then, I ask you to use courageously your intelligence, your strength, and your good will toward children in the progressive removal of the economic barriers which have retarded the full development of children in the past. There will, I warn you, be discouragements and disappointments. New standards of what constitutes social justice will develop. But the cause of children must triumph ultimately. The important thing is that we should be "on our way." Perhaps you may ask—does the road lead uphill all the way? And I must answer, yes, to the very end. But if I offer you a part in a long, hard struggle, I can also promise you great rewards. Justice for all children is the great ideal in a democracy. It is the special responsibility of women.

ABBOTT, GRACE, social worker; born, Grand Island, Nebr., November 17, 1878; daughter of Othman A. and

Elizabeth M. (Griffin) Abbott. *Education:* Ph.B., Grand Island College, 1898; LL.D., 1931; Ph.M. in Political Science, University of Chicago, 1909; LL.D., University of Nebraska, 1931; LL.D., University of New Hampshire and University of Wisconsin, 1932; Wilson College, 1934; D.L., Mount Holyoke, 1935. Delta Gamma. *Present occupation:* Professor of public welfare, School of Social Service, University of Chicago; editor, *Social Service Review*. *Previously:* Illinois Immigrants' Commission (director, 1919-20; executive secretary, 1920-21); United States Children's Bureau (Chief, 1921-34); member for United States of Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children, League of Nations, 1923-34. Government delegate, International Labor Conference, 1935, 1937. *Politics:* Progressive. *Member:* National Conference of Social Work (president, 1924). *Author:* *The Immigrant and the Community*; *The Immigrant in Massachusetts*; *The Child and the State*; contributor on child welfare to *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *Social Service Review*, *Current History*, and others. Awarded gold medal, American Social Science Association [National Institute of Social Science], 1931.—*American Women, 1939-40.*

## Grace Abbott

News of the death of Grace Abbott, professor of public-welfare administration at the University of Chicago, has been received in Washington with profound sorrow. The Nation's Capital was her home during the 13 years through which she presided over the Children's Bureau, and she will be remembered with gratitude here. But it was to no single neighborhood that she devoted her genius. The truth is that she served the whole world. Her qualities of sympathy, earnestness, sincerity, and efficiency were pledged to humanity at large. In that notable respect she was an ideal American.

Yet there is no easy explanation for the vast success of Miss Abbott's career. She was not a reformer in the ordinary meaning of the word. Rather, she was a builder. Her mind and heart had no negative aspects. With materials readily available, she constructed new social values in people. To hear her speak was to catch a vision; to labor with her toward any useful goal was to share in a dream being made real. She quickened hundreds, perhaps thousands, by

the fire of her own spirit. But her enthusiasms were governed and controlled by her scientific attitude toward every problem. She was a gracious and kindly person because she willed so to be. Her achievements were practically helpful because of her determination that they must have direct application. None of her contemporaries excelled her in knowledge of human character.

Miss Abbott focused her principal effort upon the neglected portion of the population. She befriended the mothers of the United States because she realized as few other sociologists did that they hold the fate of the republic in their hands. With similar comprehension she strove for every conceivable advantage for children, appreciating the fact that democracy can survive only with the support of a loyal younger generation. Her fame, then, was not temporary. She created immortality for herself. But those who knew her best always understood that she cared nothing for honors. The remembrance she wanted was impersonal. All that she asked was that the task should be finished, the obligation met, the duty done. She will have her wish. Her inspiration is a living force now and forever.

<sup>1</sup> Editorial from *The Evening Star*, Washington, D. C., June 21, 1939.

## National Conference of Social Work

Our conference stood in silence tonight at its general evening session in recognition of the loss all of us feel in the death of Grace Abbott, past president, who was elected to that post at our fiftieth anniversary meeting.

It is her life and her creative contribution to many of the fields which concern us that we have most vividly in mind. A Nebraskan, she has given greatly to the whole Nation. There was her early work at Hull House as director of the Immigrants' Protective League. There were her years at the Children's Bureau at Washington, first as director of the Child Labor Division, and for 13 years (1921 to 1934) as Chief. She it was who administered the first Federal Child-Labor Law; who organized the impressive White House Conference on Child Welfare Standards in 1919—the second of such gatherings; she administered the pioneer Federal-aid act for maternity and infancy

(from 1922 to 1929). She had a major part in initiating the first Federal measures for relief at the outset of the depression. Until the end of her life she was a valued adviser to the Secretary of Labor. She was chiefly responsible for the organization of the Advisory Committee on Child Welfare of the League of Nations and it was at her suggestion that the worldwide inquiry into traffic in women and children was made by the League. Only recently she served as a Government delegate to the International Labor Conference.

These strokes of leadership were only illustrations of her inveterate spending of herself for people, from the Middle West to Washington, to the world.

And through it all her friends in this Conference and everywhere prize a gorgeous human being, whose faith in democracy, whose give and take in discussion, whose fighting spirit in the causes she made her own, whose administrative capacity, and whose warmth in everyday relationships made her a living force in American life.

<sup>1</sup> Minute drafted by Paul Kellogg, 1939 president of the National Conference of Social Work, Buffalo, N. Y., and adopted by Executive Committee, June 20, 1939.

## International Labor Conference, Geneva

### TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION, FOURTEENTH SITTING, JUNE 1939

The PRESIDENT. Before proceeding with the next business on the agenda, I should like to make the following statement:

Delegates at this Conference will have learned with deep regret of the death of Grace Abbott, which occurred recently. Miss Abbott was a well-known figure in Conference circles. She was a Government delegate of the United States of America when that Government was for the first time officially represented at the International Labor Conference in 1935. At that same session she presided over the work of the committee set up by the Conference to consider the question of unemployment among young persons. She also attended the 1937 session as a Government delegate, when she was appointed reporter of the committee set up to consider the revision of the Convention's concerning the minimum age for admission of children to employment.

Miss Abbott had a long and distinguished career in her own country. For 13 years she occupied the important post of head of the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor, and was one of the promoters of legislation for the protection of children in her own country. She subsequently became a professor in the School of Social Service Administration of the University of Chicago and continued her work in the social field, rendering great services to her country. I am sure that all delegates at this Conference will wish to express their deep sympathy with the United States of America in the loss suffered by that country.

Mr. GOODRICH (Government delegate, United States of America). Mr. President, the United States delegation warmly appreciates the speech which you have made and your expression of sympathy.

## CONTRIBUTORS' COLUMN

S. JOSEPHINE BAKER, M. D., was associated with the Children's Bureau, 1926-36, as specialist in maternal and infant hygiene. She organized the New York City Bureau of Child Hygiene and was its head from 1908 to 1923. This was the first bureau of child hygiene under public auspices. Her autobiography, *Fighting for Life*, was published in 1939.

SOPHONISBA P. BRECKINRIDGE, social worker and educator, has been a member of the faculty of the University of Chicago since 1902, and professor of public-welfare administration since 1929 in the School of Social Service Administration. She was formerly dean of the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy and is the author of numerous books in the field of social work, including *Public Welfare Administration in the United States: Select Documents*.

JAMES BROWN 4TH, of Freeport, Pa., graduated from Haverford College in 1930, received his master's degree from the University of Chicago, School of Social Service Administration, in 1937 and the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Chicago in 1939. His doctoral thesis was on the history of public assistance in Chicago, 1833-93. In addition to taking all Miss Abbott's courses he worked with her for nearly 2 years as research assistant in the preparation of *The Child and the State*.

WILLIAM L. CHENERY has been the editor of Collier's Weekly since 1925, and prior to that he was editor of the New York Telegram-Mail and managing editor of the New York Sun. He was responsible for the preparation of the final report of the 1919 White House Conference on Standards of Child Welfare.

JAMES J. DAVIS was appointed by President Harding as Secretary of Labor March 5, 1921, and resigned in 1930 when he was elected United States Senator from Pennsylvania.

LUDWELL DENNY has been in newspaper work for many years, having been successively foreign correspondent for United Press, chief editorial writer and associate editor of the Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance, and editor of the Indianapolis Times. At present, he is labor editor for the Scripps-Howard papers.

WILLIAM J. ELLIS has been Commissioner of the Department of Institutions and Agencies of New Jersey since 1926. Among his manifold activities, Commissioner Ellis has served as chairman of the Subcommittee on the Physically and Mentally Handicapped of the White House Conference of 1930, and is a past president of the American Public Welfare Association.

HOMER FOLKS has been the secretary of the State Charities Aid Association of New York since 1893, except for the year 1902-3 when he was commissioner of public charities of New York City, and 1917-18,

when he was director of American Red Cross relief in France. Mr. Folks has taken an active part in three of the four White House conferences. He is chairman of the Report Committee of the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, which held its first session April 26, 1939.

FELIX FRANKFURTER, Justice of the United States Supreme Court, served as chairman of the War Labor Policies Board, assistant to the Secretary of War, assistant to the Secretary of Labor, and secretary and counsel to the President's Mediation Commission. He was professor of law at Harvard University Law School from September 1914 until he was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1939.

BESS FURMAN came to Washington from Nebraska in 1929 as a writer for the Associated Press and has had wide experience in the newspaper field.

WILLIAM GREEN has been president of the American Federation of Labor since 1924. He was appointed a member of the Advisory Council to the Committee on Economic Security, 1934. He was a member of the original National Labor Board and served as a member of the governing board of the International Labor Organization, 1935-37, and of the Advisory Council of the National Recovery Administration.

SIDNEY HILLMAN has been president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America since 1915. He was a member of the Labor Advisory Board of the National Recovery Administration in 1933 and of the National Industrial Recovery Board in 1935.

EDWARD KEATING, United States Representative from Colorado, 1913-19, has since 1919 been editor and manager of the newspaper Labor, Washington, D. C.

KATHARINE F. LENROOT, who succeeded Grace Abbott as Chief of the Children's Bureau, joined the staff of the Bureau in 1915 as a member of the Social Service Division. She served under Miss Abbott as director of the Editorial Division, 1921-22, and as Assistant Chief of the Bureau, 1922-34.

ELLEN NATHALIE MATTHEWS was with the Children's Bureau from 1918 to 1934, first as assistant director of the Child Labor Division while Miss Abbott was the director, from 1920-31 as director of the Industrial Division, and later as consultant on child-labor problems. She was chairman of the Subcommittee on Child Labor of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, 1930. After leaving the Children's Bureau she directed a study of the youth of New York, made by the Welfare Council of New York City.

GEORGE W. NORRIS was elected United States Senator from Nebraska for the term beginning March 4, 1913, and has served in that capacity ever since. He served for 10 years in the House of Representatives prior to his election to the Senate.

VIOLA PARADISE was associated with the Children's Bureau from 1915 to 1919 as a special agent. She also worked with Grace Abbott in the Immigrants' Protective League. She is the author of three novels and many short stories and articles, for some of which the backgrounds were suggested by her work in the Children's Bureau.

MAUD WOOD PARK, a leader in the woman-suffrage movement, was the first president of the National League of Women Voters, 1920-24.

FRANCES PERKINS, Secretary of Labor, was appointed to that office March 4, 1933, and is chairman of the President's Committee on Economic Security, appointed in 1934. Before her appointment as Secretary of Labor she served as a member and as chairman of the New York State Industrial Board and, from 1929, as commissioner of the New York State Industrial Commission.

THE RIGHT REVEREND MONSIGNOR JOHN A. RYAN is professor of social ethics, National Catholic School of

Social Service, Washington, D. C., and director of the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Council. He is the author of books and articles in a wide field.

CHARLOTTE WHITTON, executive director of the Canadian Welfare Council, Ottawa, is the delegate of Canada to the Advisory Committee on Social Questions of the League of Nations, as she was to the committee that preceded it.

JOHN G. WINANT, Governor of New Hampshire, 1925-26 and 1931-34, was appointed chairman of the Federal Textile Enquiry Board in 1934. He was appointed assistant director of the International Labor Office in Geneva in 1935, and later in that year Chairman of the Social Security Board. In 1937 he resigned from the Social Security Board and returned to Geneva as assistant director of the International Labor Office. In June 1938 he was elected Director of the International Labor Office, Geneva, Switzerland, his present position.

## CHILDREN'S BUREAU

KATHARINE F. LENROOT, CHIEF

## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

FRANCES PERKINS, SECRETARY



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